

3 Things American Christians Can Do to Help #BringBackOurGirls From Captivity in Nigeria

Assemblies of God pastor Kayce Okengwu in Umuahia, Nigeria, ministers to Islamic militants in the country.

He says 185 of the 200 girls that were abducted from a boarding school by Boko Haram in Chibok on April 14 were targeted by the militant Islamists because they are Christians.

"We have been informed that Boko Haram has been putting pressure on them [parents] to convert to Islam if they ever want to see their daughters again," he says.

Here are three things Okengwu says American Christians can do to help ensure the freedom of these girls:

1. Keep pressuring the U.S. government to stay in Nigeria until the girls are found. "I think the church can put pressure on government officials to insist that tactical and intelligence assistance is not withdrawn until the girls are found," Okengwu says. "We have also been told that it is possible that the girls have been divided into groups and moved out of the country."

2. Send a letter showing your support to the girls' parents and families. "They are hurting so much," Okengwu says. He has offered to forward the letters to the families. You can send the letters to the following address:

C/O The Minister in Charge
ECWA Goodnews Church

Chibok, Borno State, Nigeria

Okengwu adds, however, that the government is checking letters coming into the country. "A more effective means may be to buy a page in a major Nigerian newspaper and express your support so that both the Christians and Muslims will know," he says.

3. Pray—for revival, for the militants, for corruption in the government to be exposed and for cooperation between bordering nations to help find the girls. "Again, our ranks, the military, politics and the law enforcement has Boko Haram supporters and sympathizers within. They may have sabotaged efforts to stall the attack," Okengwu says. "Nigeria has many porous borders, especially in the northern part, where militants radicalized in Libya, Sudan, Mali, Egypt, Somalia, Morocco, Yemen, Afghanistan or Iraq can move freely and bring in arms."

CNN reports that Nigeria and four neighboring nations, such as Cameroon, are cooperating. France, the U.S., the United Kingdom and the European Union are also coordinating their support by sharing technical expertise and providing training and support for border-area management programs.

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